



Op-Ed

Public Input Needed for Downtown Corridor Sustainability Plan

Mayor Barb Tolbert

The City of Arlington enjoys a vibrant downtown business core, with a wide-variety of merchandise and services available to our residents, the greater Stillaguamish Valley, and visitors.

The City of Arlington has worked hard over the last several years on initiatives to revitalize the downtown corridor. In partnership with the Downtown Arlington Business Association (DABA) and the Stilly Valley Chamber of Commerce, we have organized, hosted, and supported dozens of events that draw both residents and visitors to our charming downtown. We have installed art work, seasonal banners and flowers, repaved the City-owned merchants parking lot, installed restrooms at Legion Park, installed lighting on street trees, and are working to develop restrooms and a pocket park in connection with the Innovation Center. Our partnerships with the DABA, the Stilly Valley Chamber, and the Northwest Innovation Center (NWIRC) have provided free training opportunities for all of our business owners that have focused on growing small businesses and marketing.

Downtown anchor stores such as Action Sports, Flowers by George, The Blue Bird Cafe, The Stilly Diner, Bistro San Martin, Arlington Hardware, and Arlington Pharmacy, continue to be the commercial hub of our downtown core. These and other anchor businesses, along with the public investments, have encouraged the growth of existing businesses such as the Garden Center at Arlington Co-Op, and have spurred the opening of new businesses such as Centennial Bar & Grill, Hometown Candle Co., Moe's on Olympic, Moe's Lounge, Ava Rose, Nostalgia, and Stilly Valley Collective (co-working space) in existing storefronts. In early October this year, there were just three vacant storefronts on Olympic Avenue and no vacancies in storefronts on West Avenue. Our new and existing businesses have grown because of the support local residents have of their hometown merchants through their purchases. Your display of those purchases in your homes and businesses, and on social media, have made Arlington a destination for visitors to also invest in our downtown.

Still, we desire to develop a strategic long-term plan that achieves retaining the character of the downtown, identifying improvements, capitalizing on the Centennial Trail, expanding the physical main street area, utilizing the main street programs, and identifying smart growth initiatives.

The City of Arlington is contracting with Western Washington University Sustainable Communities program to develop a plan for the future of our treasured downtown.

We invite you to join us and share your ideas for downtown Arlington. Imagine the Arlington downtown of the future, one that continues to provide opportunities as a civic and economic center -

what does this look like for you? A workshop has been scheduled to gather input from the community at large.

Community Workshop
Thursday, November 14, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Haller Middle School Commons
600 E. First Street, Arlington

If you cannot make the workshop to share your ideas, we encourage you to share these on the City's webpage on the Downtown Corridor Sustainability Plan at www.arlingtonva.gov/downtownplan. Ideas contributed through the website will be combined with the input received at the business workshop held in October and the community workshop in November. Additional opportunities for comments will be provided throughout the development of the plan.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Sarah Lopez, Community Revitalization Project Manager, at 360-403-3448 or slopez@arlingtonva.gov.